



Children in Foster Care

*Effect of Visitation on the Length of Time in
Out of Home Care*

Madison County

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Literature Review

- *Maintaining attachment between children in OOHC and their natural families is critical to permanency planning (Grigsby 1994).*
- *Parent visitation with children in OOHC is considered the primary child welfare intervention for maintaining parent-child relationships necessary for reunification (Haight, Black, Workman & Tata, 2001).*
- *Continued contact between the child in OOHC and their parent assists in the adjustment of the child to a foster home and increases the likelihood of the child returning to the parent (Simms & Bolden 2001).*
- *Visitation has been found to decrease the amount of time that children stay in OOHC (Grigsby, 1994 & Wright 2001).*

Quantitative Questions

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- *Is there a correlation between the frequency of visits that children have with their family and the length of time that children remain in Out of Home care (OOHC)?*
- *Is there a relationship between the number of placements and the reason that the child entered OOHC?*
- *Is there any relationship between the reason the child was placed in OOHC and the length of time that the child remained in OOHC?*

Methodology

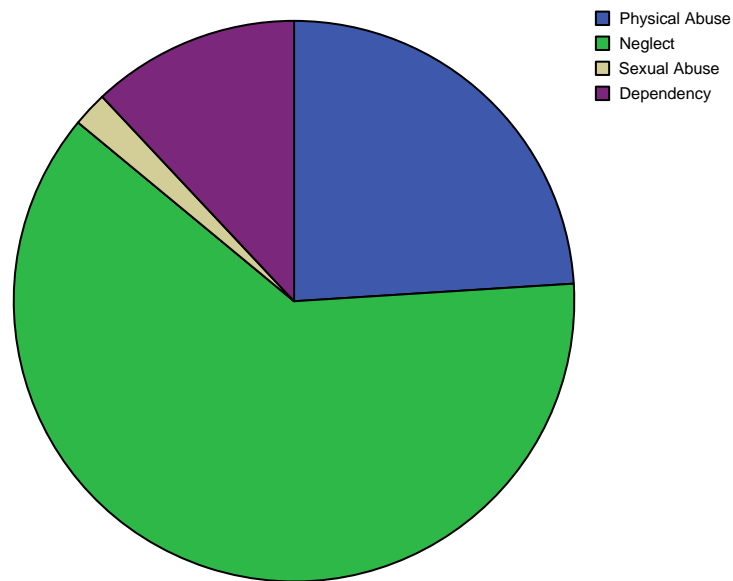


- *This is a non-experimental research study. Existing data obtained from the case records (kept up to date by caseworkers) was analyzed.*
- *A Non-probabilistic purposive sample consisting of all the children who entered OOHC for reasons of abuse, neglect or dependency between January 1, 2002 and December 31, 2002 in Madison County Kentucky was analyzed. There were 50 children removed in Madison County in 2002 that were used as the research sample.*
- *Variables: family structure, caregivers employment status, gender of child, race of child, number of children in the home at time of removal, reason for removal, type of initial placement, number of placement moves, number of visits, location of visits, and supervision of visits.*

Reason for Child's Removal from the Home

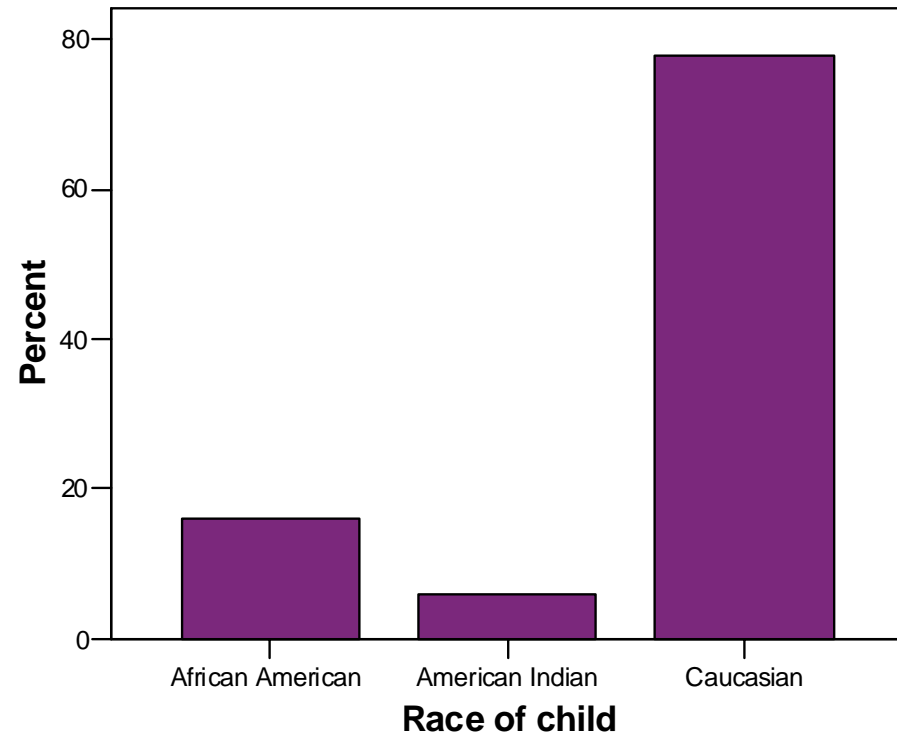
- 24% Physical Abuse
- 62% Neglect.
- 2% Sexual Abuse.
- 12% Dependency.

Reason for child's removal from the home

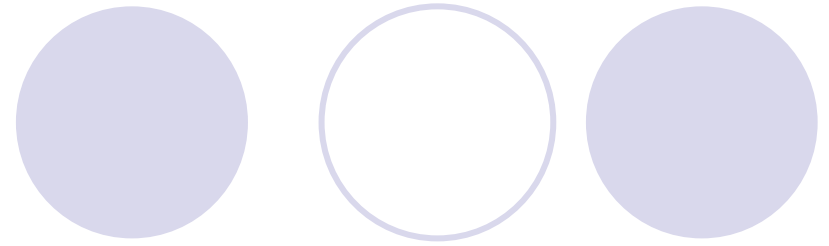


Race of Children in OOHc

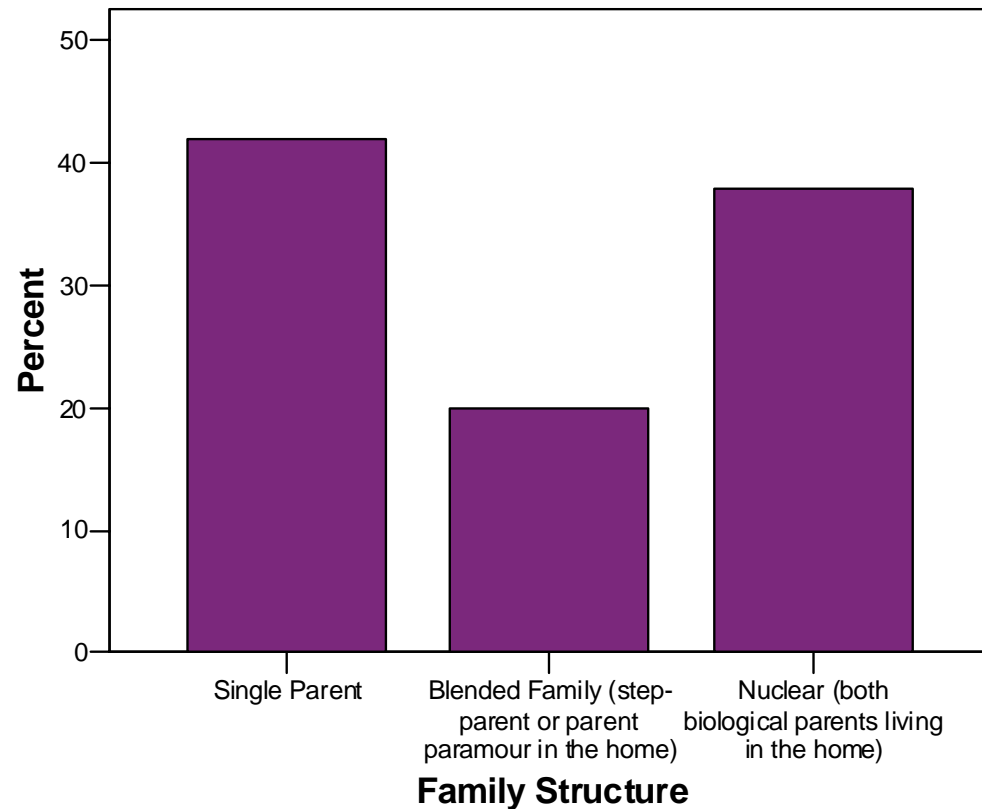
- 78% Caucasian
- 16% African American
- 6% American Indian



Family Structure

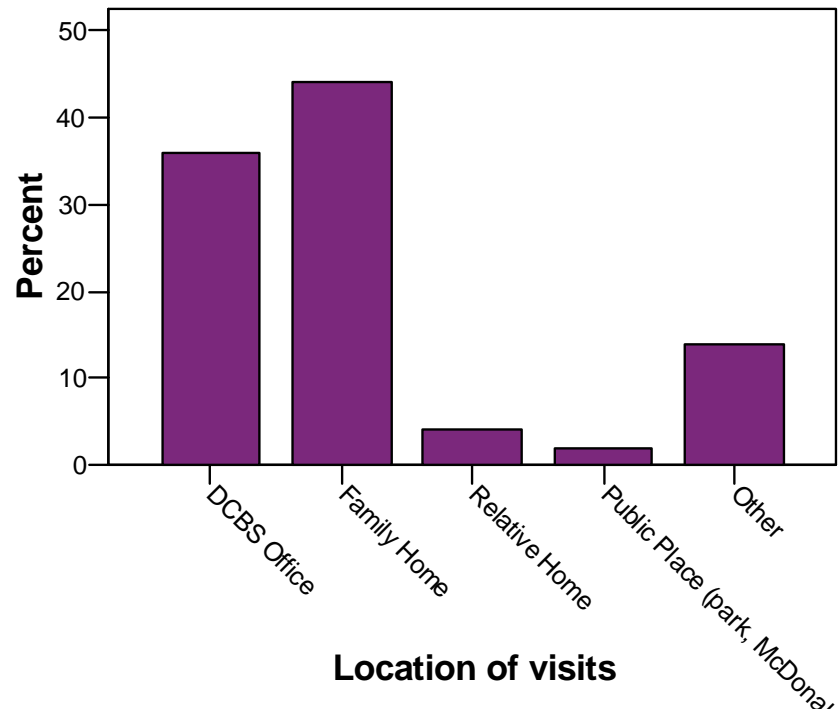


- 42% *Single Parent*
- 20% *Blended Family*
- 38% *Nuclear Family*



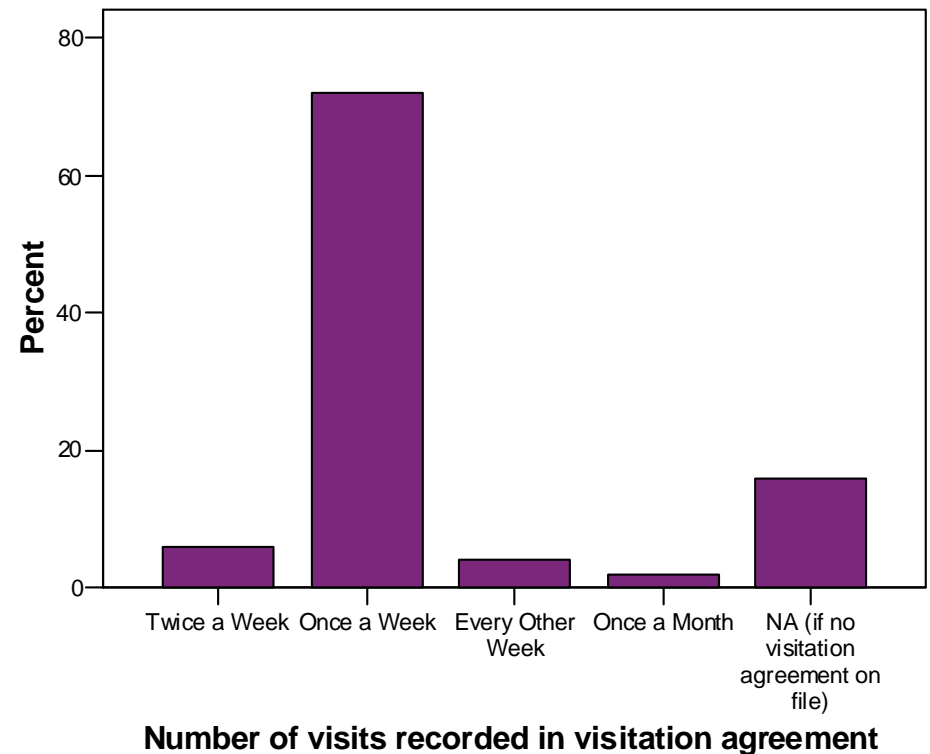
Location of Visits

- 36% DCBS Office
- 44% Family Home
- 4% Relative Home
- 2% Public Place
- 14% Other



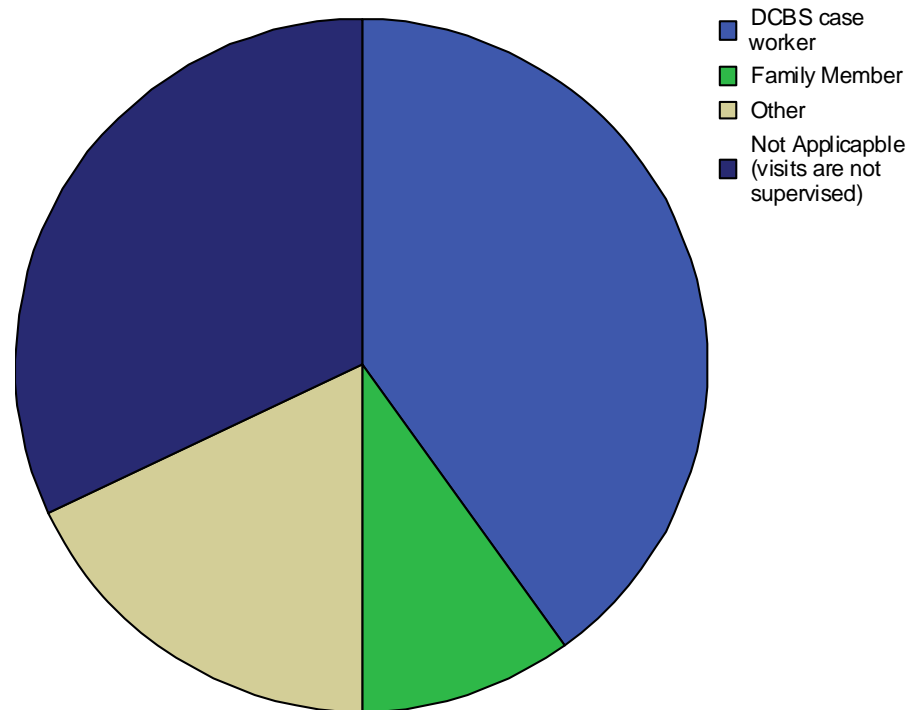
Frequency of Visits Recorded

- 6% Twice a Week
- 72% Once a Week
- 4% Every Other Week
- 2% Once a Month
- 16% No Visitation Agreement



Who Supervised the Visits?

- 40% DCBS Case Worker
- 10% Family Member
- 18% Other
- 32% Visits Are Not Supervised



Results



1. *A Pearson's Correlation was calculated examining the relationship between the months a child was in OOHC and the mean number of visits the child had each month. A weak correlation that was not significant was found ($r(48) = .023, p > .05$). Number of hours of visits each month is not related to the number of months a child remains in out of home care.*
2. *The number of placements a child has and the length of time a child remained in OOHC was compared using a One-Way ANOVA. No significant difference was found. ($F(3, 46) = 1.13, p > .05$). There was not a significant relationship between the reason a child was placed in OOHC and the number of placements a child had.*
3. *The reason a child was placed in OOHC was compared to the months a child remained in OOHC using a One Way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ($F(3, 46) = .826, p > .05$). There is no relationship found between the reason a child was removed from the home and the length of time the child remained in OOHC.*

Significant Findings

- *An independent sample t-test comparing the number of months that children who were released to the custody of relatives spent in OOHC to the number of months that children who were not released to relatives spent in OOHC found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(48) = -6.312, p < .05$). The mean number of months that children who were released to the custody of their relatives spent in OOHC ($m = 5.30, sd = 3.33$) was significantly higher than the mean number of months that children who were not released to the custody of relatives spent in OOHC ($m = 11.28, sd = 2.5$).*
- *An Independent samples T-Test comparing the mean number of placements for Caucasian children and minority children found a significant difference between the number of placements for the two groups. ($t(48) = -2.25, p < .05$) The mean number of placements for minority children was significantly higher than the mean number of placements for Caucasian children.*

Qualitative Research



- *Question: How do interactions between children and their family members influence children's length of stay in OOH?*
- *Research Design: non-experimental study that includes three extensive case studies. Written hard copy case files were reviewed and information regarding children's visits with their natural parents were analyzed. Information regarding quality of visits and reasons parents missed visits was collected and examined.*

Results



- *Identified barriers to positive visits:*
 - *Parents and children becoming bored, parents bringing other relatives to visit which decrease amount of interaction between parent and child, inappropriate managing of children's behaviors, rough playing, children's behaviors, and parents not showing up for visits without notice.*
- *Identified reasons for missing visits*
 - *car trouble, detention, illness*
- *Positive activities shared by child and parent*
 - *Reading, word books, watching movies, playing with animals, playing at the park, and eating at McDonalds.*

Conclusion

- *There was no relationship found between the number of visits that children had with their parents and the length of time that children stayed in OOHC.*
- *Minority children were found to have more placement moves than Caucasian children.*
- *Children who were released to the custody of a relative spent less time in OOHC.*
- *Limitations:*
 - *Case worker's records may not be comprehensive*
 - *Study period only examined visitation and reunification for a period of one year. Many children do not return home within the 12 month time frame.*
 - *Children in PCC placements and in relative placements may not have scheduled visitations and visitations may not be accurately documented in agency records.*